



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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## Checklist: Home

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Cold weather is on the horizon, and as members of the Army Family begin their preparations for winter, officials want them to pay special attention to one area in particular — their homes.

Wintertime usually brings frigid temperatures, inclement weather and the likelihood of power outages and being stranded in the house. Never underestimating the weather and preparing beforehand are just a couple ways to ensure the safety of you and your loved ones this winter.

“Preparing a home for cold weather ahead of time may save you some anguish down the road,” said Lt. Col. James Smith, director, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center Ground Directorate. “On duty we winterize our vehicles, weapons and other equipment to ensure they’ll work in extreme cold weather, and there’s no reason we can’t do the same at home.”

Some homeowners will turn to their fireplaces and wood stoves for heat when the temperatures dip, but it’s important to ensure routine maintenance has been performed on chimneys and other heating systems prior to the first chill. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that homes with fireplaces, wood stoves or kerosene heaters be equipped with battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors.

Dubbed the “silent killer,” carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless, tasteless and deadly. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 150 Americans die every year from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning associated with consumer products. These products include faulty, improperly used or incorrectly vented fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces.

Generators pose similar problems. The CPSC cautions against using them inside homes or garages, even if doors and windows are open. Carbon monoxide from a generator can kill an individual within minutes.

Freezing pipes can also plague homeowners when temperatures plummet. Knowing where the water main is located, insulating exposed plumbing pipes and draining water hoses before the onset of cold weather are measures individuals can take to prevent frozen and burst pipes.

“In the comfort of home, it’s easy to get complacent and not plan for weather-related emergencies,” Smith said, adding that no home is complete without a fully stocked emergency kit (flashlight, batteries, blankets, candles, first aid supplies, bottled water and ready-to-eat, non-perishable foods). “Soldiers should be vigilant and do what’s right this winter. Planning will help prevent costly home repairs and possible injuries or even death.”

For more information on home safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.